

Jenison High School Bands

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Dear 8th Grade Band Students and Parents:

As the registration process for the 2017-18 school year gets underway, many of you may have questions about your future in band, particularly the time and money commitments involved in Marching Band. Many of you joined band three years ago intending to someday be a member of the high school band, and that someday is just around the corner for you. The friends you'll make and the memories of your experiences in high school band will truly last a lifetime.

We are very proud of our Jenison High School band program. Our concert bands are well known across the state for their consistently high level of performance. All three concert bands have consistently earned 'I' ratings at the MSBOA District Band Festival. The Wind Symphony, Jenison's top concert band, performs music of the highest difficulty level for high school and even college bands. In 2013, the Wind Symphony was one of two high school bands from the whole state selected to perform at the Michigan Music Conference. In 2016, the Wind Symphony was a featured ensemble at Western Michigan University's annual Spring Conference on Wind & Percussion Music. High school band students also have opportunities to perform in Jazz Band, Pep Band, Symphony Orchestra, Musical Pit Orchestra, and various small ensembles for Solo & Ensemble Festival.

The Jenison High School Marching Band is probably the most visible aspect of our program. The Marching Band is highly respected throughout the state and the nation for its reputation of excellence both on and off the competitive field. The members, staff, and band boosters all have a great deal of pride in our program. The group enjoyed another tremendously successful season of competition this year. Some of their recent honors include:

- 2016 Bands of America Regional Finalist, Toledo, OH - Outstanding Music Performance & Outstanding Visual Performance Awards
- 2015 Bands of America Grand National Semifinalist (top 30 in the nation) - 4th Place in Class AA
- 2015 Bands of America Regional Finalist, Bowling Green, OH
- 2014 Bands of America Regional Finalist, Toledo, OH
- 2013 Michigan Competing Band Association (MBCA) Flight II **State Champion!**
- 2013 Bands of America Regional Finalist, Toledo, OH - Class AA Champion, Outstanding Music Performance & Outstanding Visual Performance Awards
- 2012 Michigan Competing Band Association (MBCA) Flight II **State Champion!**
- 2012 Bands of America Grand National Semifinalist
- 2012 Bands of America Regional Finalist, Pontiac MI - Class AA Champion, Outstanding Visual Performance & Outstanding General Effect Awards
- 2011 Michigan Competing Band Association (MCBA) Flight II **State Champion!**
- 2011 Bands of America Grand National Semifinalist - 4th Place in Class AA
- 2011 Bands of America Regional Finalist, Pontiac, MI - Outstanding Music Performance Award

The Jenison High School Marching Band is more than just a student activity. This is a closely knit group of students and adults working together to achieve something great - and that greatness is achieved year after year.

This spring, all eighth graders will perform a playing test which will also serve as their audition for the high school concert bands and marching band. Generally, those who do well on their audition and have the desire to be in marching band will make it. (Poor behavior or lack of effort during this school year might prevent a student from participation in marching band.) This audition serves many purposes including:

- Chair tryouts within our current 8th grade band;
- A portion of your current grade in band class;
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in your playing to help both you and the band as a whole improve;
- Determining your eligibility for the marching band;
- Determining your placement and chair order next year in Concert Band, Symphonic Band, or Wind Symphony at the High School.

We will take more time to discuss details about marching band in a month or so, and we'll be looking for a marching band membership commitment (including a \$100.00 deposit) by mid-April. The only decision you must make at this point is whether you'll be participating in the high school concert band program. We strongly encourage every 8th grade band student to continue playing your instrument, thereby satisfying your Fine Arts graduation requirement.

We place tremendous value on the interaction between students, staff and parents who all make up the Jenison Band family, and hope you will continue to be a part of it as a member of our high school band program. Please don't hesitate to call or email with questions anytime.

Sincerely,

Mr. Dave Zamborsky
Mr. Trevor Kline
Mrs. Anne Gembis

Some common 8th grade student and parent questions or concerns:

“I can’t fit band into my schedule with all the academics and college prep courses.”

Many band students are strong, focused academic students. One to five members of the top 10 graduates every year are band members. Students with a heavy academic load usually enjoy the hour off from “hitting the books,” as band offers a unique classroom environment during the school day. Graduation requirements will not adversely affect most band students, and the possibility of taking a “0” hour class (before school starts) helps many students get all of their classes in while still having time for other electives. Oftentimes, students who may struggle a bit academically actually find that they do best in their classes during marching season, when their time is inherently more structured, and they have many friendly peers around who can help them with their academics.

“Which band do I register for in high school?”

There are three concert groups at the high school. As a result of the auditions in 8th grade, most incoming 9th graders become members of the Concert Band. Many freshmen who work hard and do well on their audition are placed in Symphonic Band or Wind Symphony, the second and top group at Jenison High School. Since your placement will not be determined by the time you need to submit your course selections, we have simplified the registration documents so you only have to select “Band” when you select your courses online. We will take care of placing you in the appropriate ensemble after auditions are completed.

“Can I be in band AND choir/orchestra?”

We strongly support students participating in more than one of our excellent music programs at Jenison throughout their high school career. Although graduation requirements make this a bit difficult, students **can** fulfill all their graduation requirements, take two music classes all four years, and still have room for other electives in their schedule, provided they take some zero hour courses. Sample schedules will be distributed to all eighth grade music students.

“Marching Band takes too much time.”

Marching Band requires no more time than most sports and many other extracurricular activities at Jenison High School. Here’s exactly how much time it really takes: We kick off our season with a two day “Mini Camp” June 26-27, 9:00-4:00 at the high school. We have six rehearsals on Monday and Tuesday nights in July to teach music and marching fundamentals. These evening rehearsals in July are required unless students/families are out of town on vacation, in which case they are excused. Pre-Band Camp is July 31-August 3 and involves 8:00-4:00 rehearsals at the high school as we begin putting the show on the field. August 7-11 are the dates for this year’s Band Camp at Hope College. Post Camp will be held at the high school August 21-24 from 8:00 to 4:00. Once school begins, there are Monday and Tuesday night rehearsals 6:00-9:00, and most Saturdays involve morning and afternoon practice and evening competitions. Attendance is mandatory at all rehearsals. If a student must miss a rehearsal, we simply need great communication from the parents. The marching season lasts until about the middle of November. Our 2017 rehearsal and performance calendar is already available at www.jenisonbands.org under “HS Band Calendar.”

“How much does it cost to be in Marching Band?”

The initial cost of buying shoes and uniform parts makes your 9th grade year just a little bit more expensive. Annual costs for all students include band camp, food on Saturdays, and travel, housing, and food for any out-of-state trips. Our 2016 season involved a participation fee of \$900.00 per student, but with a parent volunteer credit program which makes it easy to subtract \$100 from that fee, resulting in an actual fee of \$800.00. We understand that some families might find it difficult to support a child in marching band; however, we certainly hope the cost never

keeps a student from being a part of this great organization. As you know, the Band Boosters offer many fundraisers throughout the year to help offset your band expenses. Your participation in these fundraisers is highly encouraged! In fact, with careful planning and consistent fundraising, it is possible for parents to not pay anything for their student throughout high school. Also keep in mind that student and parent communication with the directors and Band Boosters can solve most problems.

“Can I do Marching Band and still participate in fall sports?”

The answer is yes, though you will definitely be a busy person! We have always taken a great deal of pride in the fact that so many athletes participate in band. The band directors will communicate with the coaches and athletic directors about any conflicts, and we always try to make everything work out in your best interest.

“I want to stay in band, but I can’t be in Marching Band.”

Band is a year-long course, so students may not “opt out” of one semester or the other. All high school band members who are not in Marching Band work on instrumental music fundamentals during the first nine weeks of school. While we know there are sometimes irreconcilable reasons a student can not do Marching Band, we **strongly** encourage our eighth graders (and their parents!) to try Marching Band, at least for their freshman year. Along with being part of an outstanding musical group, there are so many social benefits to being in Marching Band. If you’re “on the fence” about doing Marching Band, go ahead and join! You will really improve on your instrument, and you’ll be a part of something truly great.

“How do I get into the Pep Band that plays at basketball games?”

Pep Band is an all-volunteer group made up of student musicians from all three concert groups. Many band members enjoy playing music of a very different style from regular concert season material. The group rehearses for an hour before selected home boys’ and girls’ varsity basketball games.

“How is participation in Symphony Orchestra or Musical Pit Orchestra determined?”

These opportunities are available to our Wind Symphony members. Selection is primarily based on seating order.

Questions about Band/Marching Band?

The band directors are more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Email is the best method of communication for us. If you’d like to be put in touch with a high school band parent to get their perspective, just let us know! We will also meet briefly with parents of 8th graders in the high school band room right after the High School Orientation meeting this Wednesday, February 8.